

## Reflection of Statesmanship in the Poetry of Madhusudan Das: A Critical Study

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**Abstract:** *Madhusudan Das did a yeoman's service for his motherland even sacrificing his entire property and family life. His effort for organizing the people of Odisha for a separate state on the basis of language is praiseworthy. In order to make Odia conscious he composed some poems in Odia which are the most treasuries of Odia literature. His eight poems have been analyzed here which reflect his statesmanship.*

**Keywords:** Reflection of Statesmanship, Madhusudan Das

Madhusudan Das (1848-1934) heralded Renaissance in Odisha in the early 20th Century. During his forty years' political career he brought about a radical change in the socio-political, economic field and expanded the political boundary of Odisha unifying the Odia speaking tracts. Madhu Babu was the first statesman of Odisha who brought a sense of self respect to the Odias who were struggling for identity. He also created hundred of followers who followed him and later evolved themselves as the statesmen rendering a yeomen's service to their motherland. They were Gopabandhu Das, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Biswanath Kar, Nilamani Bidhyratna, Harekrushna Mahatab and many others.

Das was a statesman in true sense of term. A statesman is dedicated to his motherland and the service of the motherland is the religion for him. A statesman is very farsighted who even think for centuries. It is said that a statesman thinks for a generation and even more than one generation but a politician only thinks for next election. In this context Madhu Babu was a statesman and a versatile genius. He was an India wide reputed lawyer, a national level politician even commanding prestige from the British people, the first entrepreneur initiating an innovative tannery and wired firms in Cuttack.

Madhu Babu was a man of literature also. He utilized his poetic talent for creating unification of Odisha and to bring a unity among the Odias. He always stressed for a unity among the people Odisha through his writings. For the development of Odia literature Madhusudan Das founded *Utkal Sabha* in 1882 but its activities were only confined within Cuttack, The Utkal Sabha actually promoted the literary activities by organizing literary symposiums in which the most talented Odia literary figures like Pyari Mohan Acharya and Gouri Sankar Roy invited to deliver their talk on literature. He was a poet and his poetry was based on patriotism.

Madhu Babu's objective of writing poetry in simple language was to make the people aware of their glorious legacy and rich heritage. To fire the imagination of Odias he wrote total number of eight poems exhorting people for racial unity. The important exhortations were *Janana* (A Prayer), *Utkal Santan* (Sons of Soils), *Janani Ra Ukti* (The Statement of Mother), *Santana Ra Ukti* (The Statement of the Son), *Samilani* (Conference) and *Jati Itihas* (History of the Race). All these poems were published as national songs before 1915 by Braja Sundar Das in Mukura Press. Apart from that, on 10th Nov, 1928 in a meeting held on the town hall of Cuttack which he himself presided over, Madhu Babu composed and recited the following poem then and there. The paraphrase of the poem is given below:

MA MA BO LI KETE MU DALILI

MA KU PAILI NAHNI

VAI VAI BOLI KETE MU KHOJILI

NADALU UTARA KEHI

This poem was published in *The Samaj* for the first time on 14, Nov 1928. Madhu Babu's words had a magical spell in awakening the people. He wrote:

"The conference is like the ocean of life of the nation and it contains a million drops of life. O! Brothers merge your individual drop of life into the vast ocean by jumping into it".

There some other lines in the poem *Samilani* (Conference) in which Madhusudan tries to inculcate the people with a sense of patriotism. All the rivers of India like the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Sindhu, Kaveri, Mahanadi and other flow in their own course and lose their own identity falling into the ocean, likewise the Odias should forget their own differences jumping into the ocean of national conferences. Otherwise, the nation will not rise up and make progress. The poet further said that the spirit of nationalism cannot be found

in the market place. If, needed be, one should act like a 'Sati', jump into funeral pyre and sacrifice to the cause of the nation. Madhu Babu writes:

"If you dedicate your life for the cause of nation, then only can you live a life of national unity. You cannot find in the market if you go on searching it"

Towards the end of the poem, *Samilani*, the poet says that a mighty warrior race has been forced to accept the defeat and deprivation due to its lack of foresight and leadership. But Madhu Baba was not a pessimist. He is hopeful that the dark cloud will be dispelled from the sky of our destiny. A will come when the tide of the ocean of union conference will rise high and flood the shore. In the harmony with of the voice of the people, it will roar and revolt against the British and frighten them away from our country. In this way the prestige of Odias will raise high in the world.

This feeling of unity is expressed in more frank and fearless manner in his poem 'Utkal Santan'. Madhu Babu is shocked by the selfishness, sycophancy and sordid attitudes of his contemporaries. His heart cries at the thought of the oppression of the Oriyas who were on the foreign rule for pretty long time of four centuries. The Odias, who once open a time, were very powerful that their empire extended from Ganga to Godavari, are now imbecile, inactive and powerless. He fervently hopes that the Odias will not suffer any more and it is high time now to assert their independence. The right time has come for their uprising and everybody has to jump into the mainstream for racial unity and national integration. Hence, in the poem, *Utkal Samilani*, he urges the people to rise up and not to stop till the goal is achieved. He writes:

Rise up, O! the sons of Utkal,

How long will you sleep?

Cannot you remember your past glory?

When will you open your lips?

The poet awakens the dumb and dying Odias to be conscious on themselves and their motherland. He wonders how the son of Utkal could tolerate for such a long time the oppression by the foreigners who made their motherland fragmented and stifled her voice. He is very much shocked at the miserable condition of his motherland and the inactivity of fellowmen. He has heard the Kharavela, the glorious son of Utkal, who, by his own prowess, had become famous in the world. But the son of Utkal of his time have

turned sycophants and ungrudgingly accepted servility. Being selfish they have forgotten completely the condition of the nation. At this critical time of Odisha Madhu Babu's words have acted like sweet incantation. He tried to indoctrinate his fellow Odias with the ideals of his own poems. He writes:

"You say that you are the mighty son of Utkal, then why are you acting cowardly? Why are you afraid of speaking out her sorrows while your motherland is crying? Your forefathers were famous for their fearless spirit. But your fear your authority to speak your own sorrows"

Madhu Babu observes that there are a lot of people who are men of words and not men of action, who talk everything but do nothing. They are not trying to console their motherland who has been crying helplessly but indulge in vested interests. Citing the example of Lord Jagannath, the symbol of our nation and culture, the poet says that before Him there is no discrimination between the high caste Brahmin and low caste Chandal, rich and poor and king and his subjects. Madhusudan, like a statesman, wishes that all the people be united forgetting their own differences like they do in the holy land of Puri. The poet is really shocked and worried for the lowly state of the Odias. He is filled with consternation when he compares the past glory of Odias with their present precarious state. He laments that the land of warriors has become a wasteland. The poet writes in his Janani Ra Ukti like a statesman:

I have been crying for long and

I have lost my eyes by shedding many a tear.

My grasping hands can recognize them

My groping hands can recognize them

Only when my sons come to near.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this national feeling of Madhu Babu has become sharp and grown sharper in this poem 'Santana Ra Ukti'. He fails to console his aggrieved motherland whose state is unthinkable and lamentably poor, as none among the millions of Odias share his feelings.

Madhu Babu was the champion of the Odisha renaissance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was the symbol of Odia's self-respect. He had a lot of confidence in him even facing much hardship. He is statesman because he hoped against hope and translated his dreams into reality which were very difficult to achieve.

## References

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